

Message Text

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ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-05 NSAE-00 PA-01

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R 260546Z NOV 74

FM AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

TO RUEHCBESECSTATE WASHDC 5431

INFO AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

AMCONSUL MEDAN

C O N F I D E N T I A L JAKARTA 14302

FOL MSG BEING REPEATED TO YOU

C O N F I D E N T I A L SURABAYA 0569

TAGS: PINT, PINS, ID

E.O. 11652: GDS

SUBJECT: NEW RESTRICTION ON PRESS IN EAST JAVA

1. ON SATURDAY NOVEMBER 23 I HAD A COFFEE MORNING FOR 24 MEMBERS OF THE SURABAYA FOURTH ESTATE AND FOUND THEM ABUZZ ABOUT A NEW RESTRICTIVE PRESS REGULATION DATED SEPTEMBER 5, 1974, BUT APPARENTLY RELEASED ONLY THAT SAME MORNING. THE REGULATION IS CALLED A "SURAT IZIN CETAK" (SIC-PRINTING LICENSE), WILL BE ISSUED BY THE KOPKAMTIBDA (BRAWIJAYA PANGLIMA WIDJOJO SUJONO) AND SHOULD NOT BE CONFUSED WITH THE EXISTENT "SURAT IZIN TERBIT" (SIT - PUBLISHING LICENSE) WHICH IS ISSUED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION.

2. THIS MORNING'S DJAWA POS REPORTS ON THE KOPKAMTIBDA DECISIONS EMBODYING THE NEW REGULATION. IT IS CLEAR THAT THE REGULATION APPLIES TO ALL SERIATIM PUBLICATIONS, INCLUDING MAGAZINES AND PHAMPHLETS, WHICH BECAUSE OF THE BACK-DATED ORDER ONLY HAVE UNTIL DECEMBER 5 TO OBTAIN THEIR SIC. ONLY PUBLICATIONS WHICH ALREADY HAVE AN SIT CAN REQUEST AN SIC.

3. REACTION TO THIS NEW REGULATION WAS MUTED ON SATURDAY MORNING BUT OBVIOUSLY THE MAJORITY OF THE JOURNALISTS PRESENT CONSIDERED

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IT AN ARBITRARY INFRINGEMENT OF PRESS FREEDOM. ONE JOURNALIST

POINTED OUT THAT WHILE IT WAS EXTREMELY DIFFICULT FOR THE GOVERNMENT TO WITHDRAW AN SIT TO STOP A NEWSPAPER FROM PRINTING "UNPLEASANT" NEWS, UNDER THE GROUND RULES ISSUED IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE SIC, THE LATTER CAN BE WITHDRAWN "WHENEVER A MAJOR AT THE KODAM DOESN'T LIKE THE WAY WE SPELL HIS NAME".

4. ALTHOUGH THE NEW REGULATION WAS ISSUED BY PANGKOPKAMTIBDA JITIM AND ONLY APPLIES TO THIS PROVINCE, THE JOURNALISTS BELIEVE WIDJOJO SUJONO ISSUED IT UNDER PRESSURE FROM JAKARTA. THEY FEAR THAT IT AUGURS THE END OF THE RELAXED SYSTEM OF PRESS CENSORSHIP HERE (SUJONO USUALLY JUST PHONES AN EDITOR AND ASKS HIM NOT TO "EXPOSE" AN UNFAVORABLE STORY) AND ITS REPLACEMENT BY A SYSTEM OF STRINGENT FORMAL CONTROLS. EMBASSY MAY WISH TO COMMENT ON THE EXISTENCE OF AN SIT/SIC PROCEDURE ELSEWHERE IN INDONESIA, IF ANY.
HOWLAND UNQUOTE TOUSSAINT

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Message Attributes

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Draft Date: 26 NOV 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
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Disposition Authority: MorefiRH
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Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
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